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(a) determining the quantity of hTERT mRNA comprising  $\beta$ -region coding sequence in said sample and in a control sample of non cancerous cells by:

- (1) contacting RNA from said sample and said control sample with a pair of primers, wherein said pair of primers consists of a first primer which hybridizes within exon 8 of the hTERT gene and a second primer which hybridizes upstream of exon 7 or downstream of exon 8 of the hTERT gene;
- (2) amplifying the nucleic acid sequence;
- (3) measuring the generation of amplification products;
- (4) determining the quantity of hTERT mRNA comprising  $\beta$ -region coding sequence in said sample from the results obtained in step (3); and

(b) identifying the presence of cancerous cells in said sample if the quantity of hTERT mRNA comprising  $\beta$ -region coding sequence in said sample is greater than the quantity of hTERT mRNA comprising  $\beta$ -region coding sequence in said control sample.

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Please add Claims 50-53.

50. (New) A method for identifying the presence of cancerous cells in a human sample wherein said method comprises:

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(a) determining the quantity of hTERT mRNA comprising  $\beta$ -region coding sequence in said sample and in a control sample of non cancerous cells by:

- (1) amplifying the  $\beta$ -region of the hTERT gene and said control sample;
- (2) measuring the generation of amplification products;
- (3) determining the quantity of hTERT mRNA comprising  $\beta$ -region coding sequence in said sample from the results obtained in step (2); and

(b) identifying the presence of cancerous cells in said sample if the quantity of hTERT mRNA comprising  $\beta$ -region coding sequence in said sample is greater than the quantity of hTERT mRNA comprising  $\beta$ -region coding sequence in said control sample.

51. (New) The method of Claim 50, wherein the amplification is carried out with a pair of primers, said pair of primers consists of a first primer which hybridizes upstream of exon 8 of the hTERT gene and a second primer which hybridizes downstream of exon 8 of the hTERT gene.

52. (New) The method of Claim 51, wherein said first primer hybridizes within exon 6 of the hTERT gene and said second primer hybridizes within exon 9 of the hTERT gene.

53. (New) The method of Claim 52, wherein said first primer is SYC1076 (SEQ ID NO:2) and said second primer is SYC1078 (SEQ ID NO:3).

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